

Message Text

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TAGS: ENRG, OECD

SUBJECT: NEA FUEL REPROCESSING REPORT

1. FINAL DRAFT REPORT ON "REPROCESSING OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUELS IN OECD COUNTRIES" HAS BEEN REVIEWED. ALTHOUGH REPORT POSES SUBSTANTIAL PROBLEMS FOR US, THERE IS INSUFFICIENT TIME BEFORE THE DECEMBER 22 DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF COMMENTS TO PROPOSE CHANGES WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO MAKE REPORT MORE ACCEPTABLE.

2. RECOGNIZING THE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED, WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT MOST APPROPRIATE COURSE OF ACTION WOULD BE TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF THE STUDY AND DELAY PUBLICATION OF THE REPORT SO THAT NEW EVALUATIONS AND ANALYSES OF THE
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REPROCESSING ISSUE COULD BE INCORPORATED INTO IT. AS IT STANDS, REPORT IS INCOMPLETE.

3. NEVERTHELESS, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT IN TOTAL AGREEMENT WITH THE REPORT, THE STUDY WAS INITIATED PRIOR TO U.S. BECOMING MEMBER OF NEA AND WE WILL NOT OBJECT TO ITS

PUBLICATION. HOWEVER, WE MUST INSIST THAT OUR DISCLAIMER SHOULD BE REGISTERED AS FOOTNOTE REPEAT FOOTNOTE TO THE REPORT AND MISSION IS INSTRUCTED TO INFORM IAN WILLIAMS OF THIS DECISION. FOOTNOTE SHOULD READ AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN

TEXT. USG HAS STUDIED THE REPORT ON "REPROCESSING OF SPENT NUCLEAR FUELS IN OECD COUNTRIES" AND ALTHOUGH IT HAS AGREED TO ITS PUBLICATION, WISHES TO NOTE THAT IN ITS VIEW, THE REPORT DOES NOT REFLECT THE NEW CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCERNS WHICH HAVE ARISEN ABOUT REPROCESSING. THESE INCLUDE DOUBTS CONCERNING THE COMMERCIAL FEASIBILITY OF THE TECHNOLOGY, QUESTIONS AS TO ITS ECONOMIC NECESSITY AND CONCERNS ABOUT THE NON-PROLIFERATION RISKS PERCEIVED TO BE ATTENDANT WITH PUTTING REPROCESSING TO WIDESPREAD NATIONAL USE. END TEXT.

4. IN DISCUSSION WITH SECRETARIAT, MISSION CAN DRAW UPON FACT THAT AS EVIDENCE OF USG CONCERN ABOUT UNCERTAINTIES AND RISKS OF REPROCESSING, IN HIS OCTOBER 28 NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT, THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED THE USG'S DECISION TO DELAY COMMERCIALIZATION OF REPROCESSING ACTIVITIES IN THE U.S. UNTIL THESE UNCERTAINTIES ARE RESOLVED. HE ALSO DIRECTED THE ADMINISTRATOR OF ERDA TO CHANGE ERDA POLICIES AND PROGRAMS WHICH HERETOFORE HAVE BEEN BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT REPROCESSING WOULD PROCEED, AND TO UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH EVALUATION OF CHEMICAL REPROCESSING AND ITS ALTERNATIVES.

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